

The Federal Diary

THE WASHINGTON POST Wednesday, July 9, 1969

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NLRB Has Its Own Labor Headache



By
**Mike
Causey**

The National Labor Relations Board, which usually spends most of its time investigating squabbles between unions and management, is having a little labor unrest in its own ranks.

An association representing many of the NLRB's 300-plus attorneys here has charged that the agency is afraid, or too embarrassed, to ask for outside help in settling the dispute. The agency says it doesn't need help.

The NLRB Professional Association asked that the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service step in to settle an impasse in contract negotiations relating to promotions. The NLRB informed the conciliation agency that there is no impasse, and has asked the employe group to return to the bargaining table and settle the matter through regular administrative channels.

The attorneys group says this is a delaying tactic. Some of the more militant members have threatened to set up "informational picket lines" to inform the public of their alleged problem. To avoid prohibitions against employes picketing the agency, Association members have asked members if their wives and children would be available for picket line duty. NLRB, for obvious

reasons, would like to avoid that.

Job Rollback; Senate-House conferees yesterday officially repealed the 1968 law that required most Federal agencies to reduce personnel by attrition. The rider attached to the 10 per cent income surtax first limited agencies to fill only seven out of 10 vacancies. Later, Budget Bureau tightened the restriction to six out of 10.

At the same time Congress exempted most of the Post Office's 700,000 plus jobs from the attrition order and also excused Vietnam related activities of Defense, the FBI, and FAA's Air Traffic controllers. Agencies complained that they couldn't get their work done because they couldn't fill vacancies caused by retirements, resignations and deaths. President Nixon asked Congress to repeal the attrition order. Both the Senate and House are expected to go along with the conferees' recommendations.

Scientists and Engineers: Pay tables carried on Page A-9 yesterday got switched around. The table showing new scales for GS 5 through GS 12 employes should have been labeled "Engineers" and the table for GS 5 through GS 11 should have been marked "Scientists." Engineers now start at \$8030 and go to \$17,849. Scientists under the new special rate range from \$7824 to \$15,721.

Incidentally, many employes under the physical science sub-series are upset with their new scales. For some of them the raise is less than \$150 a year.

They say they were led to

believe (by their agencies) that they would get the same raise as other white collar workers, who received an average 9.1 per cent. Most were given much less.

Patent Office: Officials say there is no truth to rumors that the office will move from Crystal Plaza in Arlington to Rockville. The office has been in Virginia for about two years, and has about eight years under its present lease. The Office eventually hopes to have its own building. But officials say there is no plan to move in the foreseeable future.

Postal Press Association: Editors of the United Federation of Clerks, which operates its own news service, will meet in Miami Aug. 1-2 to find out who has been doing the best job. The Miami Herald is judging publications from more than 200 publications. UFPCL legislative director, Patrick J. Nilan, heads the press service.

Retirement Bill: The House is still two weeks away from voting on the bill by Rep. Dominick V. Daniels (D-N.J.) that would make retirement more attractive for thousands.

Many eligible employes are delaying retirement actions until the House action. The Daniels bill would permit them to figure their annuities based on the highest average three years of service. Now annuities are figured on the high-five formula.

Daniels would also raise agency and employe retirement contributions from 6.5 to 7 per cent, to improve financing of the Civil Service retire-

ment system. The high three-year formula, plus credit for unused sick leave at retirement is a big dollar item with employes.

Insiders on Capitol Hill say the Daniels bill isn't likely to come up for a vote next week. They suspect that most members of Congress will be heading to Cape Kennedy, to watch the moon shot. Backers of the bill hope some action will come the week of July 21.

Sick Leave or Strike? Postal inspectors are continuing their investigation of the excuses of more than 70 New York postal workers who called in sick last week. The mass use of sick leave in two stations forced the Department to shift workers from other offices to keep the mail moving. All involved have been suspended indefinitely.

The Department ordered the employes to prove that they were sick and not illegally "withholding services." If they are found guilty of withholding services, they could be sent to prison, fined or both.

Cliff Hangers: Federal workers who must occasionally hang over cliffs, work on drive near them or perform other hazardous chores can be paid a 25 per cent differential. The extra pay is also available for those traveling under unsafe conditions (commuting generally doesn't count), engaged in water search and rescue operations, or who must work in areas where exposure to severe weather is possible. If you think you qualify, see your personnel office.

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THE WASHINGTON POST Monday, June 23, 1969

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Agnew Gets A New Crack at Pay Raise

By Willard Clopton Jr.
and Mike Causey

Vice President Spiro Agnew will have another crack at a pay raise before the House takes up a liberalized retirement plan for his 3 million Federal civilian colleagues.

The word is out that the Daniels retirement reform bill won't come up for a House vote until the Senate has dealt with a measure to give the Vice President a \$62,500 salary (he now gets \$43,000) and raise the pay of Congressional leaders. It killed a pay raise plan for the Vice President earlier, and now is considering a House-passed bill.

The retirement bill by Rep. Dominick V. Daniels (D-N.J.) would raise Government and employee contributions to the CS Retirement Fund from 6.5 to 7 per cent. In return, workers (and members of Congress) could compute retirement annuities on the highest three years of average salary. At present they must base them on a high-five-year formula.

Civil Service employees would also get credit at retirement for unused sick leave. This provision wouldn't affect Congressmen, who are not required to fill out sick leave slips or produce a doctor's excuse when they have a cold, get the mumps or suffer from other minor ailments.

Thousands of retirement-age employees have been delaying leaving Government. They want to await action on the Daniels bill that would mean higher annuities for most of them.

But legislation-watchers on



Clopton



Causey

Capitol Hill say the Daniels bill won't come up in the House until the Senate does something (anything) about the leadership pay raise. That could delay a House vote on the Daniels measure until mid-July.

The retirement bill sailed through the House last year but died in the Senate. Daniels reintroduced it this year and a House vote was scheduled for April 30. But House leaders, who favor it, decided that wasn't a good time to bring the bill before their politically sensitive colleagues. The Congressmen were still smarting over criticism of their 41 per cent pay raise. They feared somebody would say the Daniels bill was another "windfall" package for members.

But the thinking now is that the Daniels bill will be brought up in July—after the leadership bill is disposed of—and will be passed. There is a good chance, however, that Congressmen (who pay 7.5 per cent into their more generous retirement fund) may be cut out of the high-three-year formula.

At any rate, the Daniels bill is still alive. It has been given a moderate shot in the arm by the decision of Sen. Gale

McGee (D-Wyo.), who has scheduled hearings on an identical bill of his own before his Post Office and Civil Service Committee. Those hearings should begin July 10, after the Independence Day recess.

Meantime, supporters of the Daniels bill are trying to convince skeptical Congressmen that the high-three-year provision would not be a "windfall" for legislators, who may be involuntarily retired next year by the voters. They point out that anyone, Congressman or civil servant, who quits shortly after the bill becomes law will get a minor windfall anyhow, since he'll have paid less into the fund than future retirees.

About Time, Too! The Agriculture Department's credit union got a letter the other day from a former employee. He wanted to know about his \$3 account.

The worker explained that he'd left some time before (1937 to be exact) and didn't take his three bucks with him. The credit union sent it to him, with an apology for what inflation had done to those 32-year-old dollars.

Unfortunately, the employee didn't earn any interest, since \$3 wasn't considered a full share in the 1937 credit union. Otherwise, somebody figured out, he'd have pocketed a cool \$30 for those 32 years of waiting.

American Federation of Government Employees will be the first union representatives to testify on labor-management legislation as the Senate Post Office and Civil Service Committee begins hearings today. The big AFL-CIO union

wants the Government to legalize and update its union recognition program, now operated under a seven-year-old Executive Order.

AFGE President John Griner, leadoff witness, will have plenty of moral support. An estimated 3500 AFGE members are in town for a three-day legislative rally. Most of them plan to attend the 10 a.m. hearing.

Foul ball? A day before the annual congressional baseball game Tuesday night at Kennedy Stadium, Rep. Silvio O. Conte (R-Mass.), manager of the Republican team, arose in the House and said he was so confident of a GOP victory that he was going to play Rep. Wilmer (Vinegar Bend) Mizell (R-N.C.), the former major league pitcher, in left field.

But came the game, and Conte changed his mind. With his team ahead, 5-2, Conte unaccountably inserted Mizell as his hurler and the old Cardinal and Mets lefthander struck out everybody he faced for two innings. The GOP won, 6-2.